

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01 EPG-02
STR-04 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /095 W
-----252031Z 043435 /70

R 251614Z MAY 77
FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3884
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION OECD PARIS

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BRUSSELS 5331

E.O. 11652: N/A
TASG: EEC, US, UK, PFOR
SUBJECT: MAY 24 SPEECH BY UK FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN

1. SUMMARY. IN THE MAY 24 SPEECH BEFORE THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION IN BRUSSELS, UK FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN REVIEWED AND DEFENDED THE RECORD OF THE UK PRESIDENCY, EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF CLOSE US/EC RELATIONS, AND OFFERED POINTED COMMENTS ON EC ENLARGEMENT, DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE, AND EC DECISION-MAKING. HIGHLIGHTS FROM PREPARED TEXT OF OWEN'S SPEECH ARE SET FORTH BELOW (WE UNDERSTAND THAT OWEN DEPARTED SLIGHTLY FROM PREPARED TEXT WHILE STICKING TO ITS GENERAL LINE; THE UK PERMREP SPOKESMAN HAS INFORMED US THAT MAY 25 ACCOUNTS IN UK AND BRUSSELS PRESS WERE PREPARED ON BASIS OF EMBARGOED TEXT OF PREPARED SPEECH). END SUMMARY

2. RECORD OF THE UK PRESIDENCY

OWEN CHIDED THE PRESS FOR PUBLICIZING ONLY THE COMMUNITY'S DIFFICULTIES AND FORGETTING OR TAKING FOR GRANTED THE ACHIEVEMENTS. HE NOTED, IN THIS RESPECT, THAT "THE COMMUNITY HAS A DREADFUL
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TENDENCY TO BE ITS OWN WORST ENEMY...WE REPEATEDLY FIX UNREALISTIC TARGET DATES AND DESPAIR WHEN THEY ARE NOT MET...THERE ARE STILL SOME COMMUNITY COMMENTATORS WHO ASSESS PROGRESS AGAINST A SHORT TERM FEDERALIST GOAL TO WHICH ONLY A FEW ZEALOTS ASPIRE...THIS IS A TOTALLY UNREALISTIC YARDSTICK AND IT WOULD BE ARBITRARY AND MISTAKEN TO CHOOSE IT AS THE BASIS FOR ASSESSMENT."
OWEN DECLINED TO JUDGE THE SUCCESS OF THE UK PRESIDENCY BUT

POINTED TO TWO ACHIEVEMENTS: DRAWING THE SOVIETS AND OTHER EAST EUROPEANS INTO FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS; AND SECURING A SEAT FOR COMMISSION PRESIDENT JENKINS AT THE DOWNING STREET SUMMIT.

3. NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE

OWEN SINGLED OUT THE NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE AS THE DOMINANT ISSUE DURING THE UK PRESIDENCY. HE EMPHASIZED THE EC'S GOOD RECORD OF COMMITMENT TO THE SUCCESS OF THE CIEC AND EMPHASIZED, AS WELL, INCREASED LDC ACCESS TO EC MARKETS UNDER THE LOME CONVENTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE EC'S GSP, TO THE BENEFIT OF THE POOREST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

4. US/EC RELATIONS

OWEN DESCRIBED THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US IN THE FOLLOWING TERMS: "IT IS AN IMPORTANT COMMUNITY INTEREST TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL THE MAJOR INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS. IT IS AN ESSENTIAL COMMUNITY INTEREST TO ENJOY A CLOSE AND INFLUENTIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES, THE STRONGEST DEMOCRACY IN THE WEST; AND THIS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT WHEN FACED BY A NEW ADMINISTRATION. US POLICIES WILL HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON OUR PROSPERITY: TO IGNORE THIS IS TO IGNORE THE BASIC FACTS OF INTERNATIONAL LIFE. THE AMERICAN POSITION BEARS DIRECTLY ON COMMUNITY INTERESTS AT THE MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS, IN THE ENERGY FIELD, AND IN OUR EFFORTS TO LIFT OUR ECONOMIES OUT OF RECESSION. IT IS FANCIFUL TO DENY THIS PROPOSITION, OR TO TRY TO SET UP A FALSE ANTITHESIS BETWEEN COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICANS AND PRESERVING A EUROPEAN IDENTITY. WE SHOULD DEVELOP

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THE RELATIONSHIP TO OUR MUTUAL ADVANTAGE. THE ATTITUDE WHICH SEES THE EUROPEAN COMMITMENT AS AN EXCLUSIVE COMMITMENT AND REJECTS A CREATIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP IS WHOLLY ALIEN TO MY OWN PERSONAL EUROPEAN COMMITMENT AND IS, I BELIEVE, BASED ON A FEELING OF WEAKNESS AND INFERIORITY WHICH WE OUGHT TO HAVE LONG SINCE GROWN OUT OF."

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5. EC ENLARGEMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE

NOTING THE DIFFICULTIES POSED BY ENLARGEMENT, OWEN SAID
NEVERTHELESS THAT THE PROSPECT OF ACCESSION TO THE EC
IS "THE FIRMEST BUTTRESS WE CAN OFFER FOR UPHOLDING DEMOCRACY."
OWEN ALSO NOTED THAT, "IT IS INCONCEIVABLE TO ME THAT ANY
COUNTRY CAN BE WITHIN THE EC WHILE NO LONGER PRACTICING DEMOCRATIC
GOVERNMENT...IT IS A WEKNESS THAT WE HAVE NO POWER OF EXCLUSION
FOR A NON-DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY AND THIS IS SOMETHING WE SHOULD
ALL EXAMINE."

6. EC DECISION-MAKING

OWEN EMPHASIZED THAT PARTLY BECASUE OF BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS
FOR MEMBER STATES, AGREEMENT ON INTERNAL EC DEVELOPMENT WILL
ALWAYS BE MORE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE THAN POLITICAL COOPERATION
DECISIONS ON COMMON EXTERNAL POLICIES. HE ADDED THAT DECISION-
MAKING IS COMPLICATED BY THE CONTINUOUS PROCESS OF ADAPTATION WHICH
THE EC HAS UNDERGONE SINCE THE 1972 ENLARGEMENT.

7. UK VIEW OF THE COMMUNITY.

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AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY, OWEN'S SPEECH CONCLUDED BY
RECALLING THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE UK'S DECISION TO JOIN
THE COMMUNITY AND IMPLYING THAT THEY ARE STILL VALID: "NO SINGLE
EUROPEAN NATION HAD THE RESOURCES, MORAL OR MATERIAL, SUCCESSFULLY
TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES OF THE MODERN WORLD...WE SAW THAT, IN
THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTRY, WESTERN EUROPEAN
RELATONSHIPS WOULD HAVE TO BE PLACED ON A WHOLLY NEW FOOTING
AND THAT BRITAIN COULD NOT STAND ASIDE FROM THIS PROCESS."
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